

## **The Church a Fellowship of Believers**

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**Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.**

**When the pure seed is planted in a honest and good heart the result is cf:**

**Luke 8:15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep [*it*], and bring forth fruit with patience.**

**So if a believing person simply comes to Christ as as the first Christians did on Pentecost in AD 30**

**Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

**Then it makes sense that God will do as He did then cf:**

**Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

**Let us pick up with the theme of the first Gospel Sermon Cf:**

**Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.**

**“You crucified” they and we must see and accept our guilt before they can be directed toward a way to rid themselves of it.**

**This is point of whole sermon “Lord” Greek-*Kurios*, Hebrew-*YHWH* Unspeakable name of God, & “Christ” Greek-*Christos*, Hebrew-Messiah or Anointed One.**

**Acts 2:37 Now when they heard [*this*], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men [*and*] brethren, what shall we do?**

**No faith was produced by demonstrations of the spirit Acts 2:1-21. Only with preaching of Gospel in, Acts 2:22-36 was and is faith produced. Cf**

**Rom 10:17 So then faith [*cometh*] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

**They were pricked in their heart ... is equivalent to saying that these people then and there believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no way that they would**

**have followed on to obey the word if they had not believed. Thus, right here in the gateway of the historical church stands the sure and certain truth that "faith alone" did not save the first Christians; nor can the conclusion be denied that "faith alone" never saved any Christians since then.**

**The terms of the salvation for those believers in Christ were immediately announced by that apostle to whom Jesus had promised that whatever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven Matthew 16:13ff. There was no ambiguity in the announcement.**

**What shall we do ...? In the light of Peter's text, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" Acts 2:21, the meaning of this question is "What shall we do to be saved?" It has no other possible interpretation.**

**Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

**Faith is not the correct understanding of orthodox opinions, but, consists of obediently responding to instructions.**

**Notice the scripture does not say whether repentance and baptism is essential for salvation, or, because of salvation, or, unto salvation, whether it's evangelical, sacramental, or necessary. God takes care of the philosophical basis of salvation. Anyone who debates how they want to be saved, is not ready to be saved in the first place!**

**This verse contains 2 imperatives & 2 promises.**

**Dependence of the clause, remission of sins, relies upon both imperative verbs, repent and be baptized.**

**2 promises, remission of sins and gift of Holy Spirit.**

**Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, [*even*] as many as the Lord our God shall call.**

**Remember the prophecy in Joel? Well, this is how you call upon the name of the Lord. These are the conditions of salvation for whole Christian Age. Prove it?**

**Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

**... to all that are afar off ... certainly includes the Gentiles; but Peter, like many of the prophets of the Old Testament, was here uttering words, under the power of inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that he himself did not fully understand; for it took a miracle, later on in Acts 10, to convince Peter that the Gentiles should be included as proper recipients of the gospel message**

**Acts 2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.**

**“... Many other words ... Thus Luke was giving a resume of this great sermon, Peters sermon was much fuller than the synopsis that is recorded here ...**

**With these words Luke summarized the great message of Pentecost and, significantly, now the initiative rested with men, not God. The promised Spirit had come; henceforth forever, until the final judgment, that Spirit will be in the world; the terms of accepting the gospel had been announced, and they would never be changed. Therefore the final word to humanity was**

**“... save yourselves from this untoward generation ... “ A better translation would be: “ Be saved” or “allow yourself to be saved” the verb is passive, we submit in obedience to God’s plan by following instructions.**

**Now a Fellowship called “the Church” is born.**

**Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [*unto them*] about three thousand souls.**

**At the time the Law of Moses was given 3,000 were killed for their disobedience regarding the golden calf. The Law is strict and unforgiving but at the preaching of the Gospel 3,000 were saved.**

**Exodus 32:25-28 And when Moses saw that the people [*were*] naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto [*their*] shame among their enemies:) 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who [*is*] on the LORD'S side? [*let him come*] unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, [*and*] go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.**

**Acts 2:42** And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The original primitive worship of the Church (God's people) is described.

The apostles' doctrine (teaching) ... As original church did, so should every church do, the apostles' teaching being the only doctrinal authority in the Christian religion. This is limited, of course, to the teachings of the New Testament, with the Old Testament being taught as our "school master" to bring us to Christ.

**II Timothy 2:2** And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

"... Fellowship ..." Greek *koy-no-nos*: a sharer, associate, companion, fellowship, partaker, or partner from Greek *koy-nos*: common literally shared by all.

"... fellowship ..." Paul uses this Greek word for giving our contribution and offerings.

**Romans 15:26** For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

"... the breaking of bread ..." which is the Lord's Supper Campbell, McGarvey, B.W. Johnson & Coffman all supported this conclusion in their commentary:

"The expression itself may designate an ordinary meal, as in Luke 24:35; but that here would be out of place. There can be no doubt that the Lord's Supper at this period was preceded uniformly by a common meal often called a Love feast, as when the Lord's Supper was instituted." Most scholars hold that this was the prevailing usage in the first centuries after Christ; and we have traces of this practice in 1 Corinthians 11:20ff, and in all probability in Acts 2:46.

**I Corinthians 11: 23-31** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [*same*] night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake [*it*], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also [*he took*] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [*it*], in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

**... and prayers.” Whereas in Judaism, prayers were offered at stated times of the day, the Christians offered prayers at any and all times, and in any and all places.**

**Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them [*to this end*], that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;**

**There is great power in prevailing prayer.**

**Luke 11:9-10 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.**

**Acts 2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.**

**This verse is again proof that only the Twelve Apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Here it is clear enough that the one hundred twenty were not able to do the wonders and signs which accompanied the Twelve Apostles.**

**Acts 2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;**

**Acts 2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [*men*], as every man had need.**

**3,000 new Christians had obeyed the Gospel, they were from all over the world visiting Jerusalem for Passover and Pentecost. They needed to be fed and taken care of while they were taught the first principles here to **before** called “the apostles doctrine” before they returned to their own home lands.**

**It must be remembered that the New Testament congregational common sharing lasted but a short while, it was spontaneously started by believers, it was not undertaken upon the basis of any command of Christ or the apostles, and there is no teaching whatever set up with a view for continuing this practice.**

**This is not communism, socialism or Marxism.**

**In the book of Acts, holy men gave into the treasury of a common fund.**

**Christians, through love, parted their goods unto all men.**

**Communists part all men from their goods**

**Acts 2:46** And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

... house to house ...” indicates that there had been no abolition of private property, nor the removal of the means of production from the hands of individuals; and, therefore, what we behold in the preceding verses is not "communism" at all, but Christian generosity.

Indeed the first Church buildings were individual's houses.

**Acts 5:42** And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

**Romans 16:3-5** Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise [*greet*] the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epaenetus, (Ep-E-ne-tus) who is the firstfruits of Achaia (a-KAY-a) unto Christ.

**I Corinthians 16:19** The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

**Colossians 4:15** Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, (La o-di-CE-a) and Nymphas, (NYM-fas) and the church which is in his house.

**Philemon 1:1-2** Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy [*our*] brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, 2 And to [*our*] beloved Apphia, (A PEE ya) and Archippus (Ar•CHIP-pus) our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house:

**Acts 2:47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

**Who can add you to the Church? Only the Lord can add you to the Church. Repentant baptized believers are added by the Lord to “the Church.”**

It is difficult to imagine a more significant chain of events than those related in this chapter, closing as it does, with this reference to a successful, ongoing Church, faithful to God and to each other. It all began beautifully enough, but Satan would not long permit the spread of divine truth without opposition; and

**Luke quickly moved to relate developments which would disperse this happy church.**

**The history of man shows he soon departs from God's way.**

**The first departure in the history of the church was how Churches were governed.**

**God's plan was autonomous congregations cf;**

**Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, [but] it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.**

**Remember Jesus taught cf:**

**Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.**

**Scripture teaches that elders, bishops, shepherds, pastors, presbyters or overseers have oversight of local congregations. I Timothy 3:1ff & Titus 1:5ff.**

**By 150 AD men began to designate 1 man as a bishop and he was over an area of several churches called a diocese. Acts 20:28-30, I Peter 5:1-4 & Hebrews 13:17.**

**The Roman Emperor Constantine ended the last persecution in 312 AD and called a Church council at Nicaea in 325 AD.**

**Those Bishops then adopted the first man made creed called the Nicene Creed.**

**We date the Catholic Church 606AD When Boniface III took the title of Pope (*pappas*) or Universal Bishop of Roman Catholic Church. This is in spite of Christ being the Head of the Body, the Church cf:**

**Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence.**

**Matthew 16:16-18 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

**We worship at a Blood Bought Church cf:**

**Acts 20:28-30 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.**

**II Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also**

**II Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**

**Shortly Rome made laws: Latin to be only language of scriptures and the common man was denied access to the scriptures.**

**Church History-The Great falling away:**

**Rome sold indulgences & built St Peter's Basilica making merchandise of people's sins cf:**

**II Peter 2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.**

**Greek Orthodox or Greek Catholic split from Roman Catholic in 1054 AD.**

**They kept much of the pomp and false teaching of Rome except they have: No Popes, Priests may be married, and they have a cappella singing without instruments.**

**Church History, Protestant Reformation:**

**The Protestant Reformation did not go far enough in stamping out the wicked man made changes of the medieval Roman Church which was the great falling away from the faith found in the Bible, cf:**

**II Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for [*that day shall not come*], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**

**1384 AD John Wycliffe produced hand written translations of the bible into common English based upon Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation. Wycliffe died a natural death, but 44 years later under Pope Martin V, Wycliffe's bones were dug up burned and scattered over the river Swift. Rome then began to burn all the Bibles they could find. Men who begin burning books will end up burning men. Soon after Tyndale was burned at the stake in 1536 by the Catholics and thousands more of simple Christians followed in the Great Inquisition.**

**In 1530, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses, in which Catholic doctrine was contrary to Scripture, to the door of the Roman Catholic church in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther was excommunicated by the Roman Church.**

**In 1534, King Henry VIII of England, began the Church of England, which retained much of the Roman Catholic false teaching, pomp and ritualism.**

**In 1536, John Calvin began what became the Presbyterian & Reformed church.**

**1609 Our Baptist friends began in opposition to the Church of England.**

**1798, John Wesley began the Methodist church.**

**All Protestant denominations are less than 500 years old. We need to go back to the Church that we read about & is described in the Bible.**

### **The Restoration Movement**

**Seeks to restore the church described in the bible & the unification of all Christians in one body as the Bible describes**

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**John 17:20-21 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, [*art*] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**

**I Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [*that*] there be no divisions among**

**you; but [*that*] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

**in a single body cf:**

**Ephesians 1:22-23 And hath put all [*things*] under his feet, and gave him [*to be*] the head over all [*things*] to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

**Ephesians 4:3-6 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 [*There is*] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who [*is*] above all, and through all, and in you all.**

**We in the Restoration Movement seek to be patterned after New Testament church.**

**We are neither Protestants, Catholics, nor Jews, but Christians only cf:**

**Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto AN-ti-och. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**

**This movement developed from several different efforts to return to apostolic Christianity. During Middle Ages dissenters such as John Wycliffe & John Huss called for restoration of the Church by return to the primitive form of Christianity.**

**After all at the heart of the Reformation Movement was the cry of “scripture alone” (sola scriptura).**

**English Puritans also sought to restore a pure “primitive” church.**

**Barton W Stone began at Cane Ridge, KY, and his group called themselves simply Christians cf:**

**I Peter 4:16 Yet if [*any man suffer*] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.**

**Another group began in Pennsylvania & West Virginia & were led by Thomas Campbell & his son Alexander. They called themselves Disciples of Christ. Elias Smith & James O’Kelly led similar groups. These groups sought to restore the whole Churches of Christ on the pattern set forth in the New Testament,**

**II Peter 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [*pertain*] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:**

**“we speak where the Bible speaks & are silent where the Bible is silent”.**

**II Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

**16 All scripture [*is*] given by inspiration of God, and [*is*] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

**II Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [*as they were*] moved by the Holy Ghost**

**The pure word of God is described as seed cf:**

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**When the pure seed is planted in a honest and good heart the result is cf:**

**Luke 8:15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep [*it*], and bring forth fruit with patience.**

**So if a believing person simply comes to Christ as as the first Christians did on Pentecost in AD 30**

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**Then it makes sense that God will do as He did then cf:**

**Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

**Both groups believed that the creeds of men kept Christianity divided.**

**In 1832 they joined in fellowship with a handshake. We are united in the belief that: Jesus is The Christ, the Son of God,**

**Matthew 16:16** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

that Christians should celebrate the Lords Supper on the first day of the week,

**Acts 20:7** And upon the first [*day*] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

that immersion in water is a part of salvation just like belief and faith.

**Mark 16:15-16** And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

**Acts 2:38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**Romans 6:3-6** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [*in the likeness*] of [*his*] resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [*him*], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

**Galatians 3:27** For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

For the Church is Divine because it was created and established by God through Christ.

**Body of Christ, Bride of Christ & Divinity of the Church:** The Church is also described as Body of Christ cf: One body with many members I Corinthians 12:12-27, one body Romans 12:4-5. Church is called the Body Eph. 1:22-23, There is but one body therefore, one Church Eph. 4:4, Eph. 4:11-15 & Eph. 5:23, Col 1:18 & Col 1:24

**The Church of Christ is also described as The Bride of Christ:** Isaiah 62:2-5, II Cor 11:2, Rev 19:7, Rev 21:2 & Rev 22:17.

**The Divinity of Church of Christ: Some people think all religions are of divine origin & are of equal value to salvation of your soul. Others recognize some religions are not divine, nor capable of saving your soul. Anything God of Heaven is responsible for, anything He has originated is divine. Divine figures of speech used to describe the Church of Christ: The Kingdom of God cf: Mark 9:1 & Col 1:13. The Holy names of God & Christ are attached to Church I Cor. 11:16 & Rom 16:16. The Church Divinely established cf: Dan 2:44 & Matthew 16:13-18. Church is Divine in ownership cf: Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:25, I Cor 6:19-20 Jesus could call it "My Church" Matt. 16:18. Church has a Divine foundation I Cor 3:11 with Jesus Christ Chief Cornerstone. Church has a Divine head Col 1:18, Eph. 5:23-24, Matt 28:18 & Eph. 1:22 Church is the temple of God on earth Eph. 2:21-22 It is to the Church God adds those being saved cf: Acts 2:47.**

**Sources: KJV, theWord.com, Coffman's Commentary, Alexander Campbell Commentary, BW Johnson & Clarkes Commentary, and "World Conquest"**